

June 14, 2002

Brigadier General Edwin J. Arnold, Jr.  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Mississippi Valley Division  
P. O. Box 80  
Vicksburg, MS 39181-0080

Dear General Arnold:

On behalf of the Missouri Corn Growers Association (MCGA), I would like to commend the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the thorough, and inclusive manner in which you have conducted the Upper Mississippi River-Illinois Waterway Navigation Study. The Corps has taken great strides to ensure that stakeholders are informed and involved in the study process.

Throughout the study process MCGA has emphasized the importance of modernizing locks on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. This river system connects midwestern growers with world markets. However, investments in this crucial waterway have not kept pace with current or future demand.

If lock expansions are not made by 2020, the average cost of transporting corn and soybeans to export could increase by 17 cents per bushel. This seemingly modest cost increase will have a devastating impact on the agricultural economy in Missouri. These impacts include reduced production, lost export sales, and a drop in farm income. This precipitous drop in farm income would reduce agricultural employment resulting a decline in state and local tax receipts.

MCGA is committed to develop practical, common sense solutions to improve the river's ecosystem. We have always advocated for a better environment. It is the contention of all of our members that we can make much needed improvements to the locks, and still provide for environmental enhancement. These are not mutually exclusive goals.

Finally, after an extensive review of this interim report, we believe that the Corps has provided sufficient documentation to justify authorization of new locks. Even

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though the Corps will not complete the final feasibility study until 2004, they have presented convincing evidence that current traffic levels justify new locks, and increases in future traffic will only further exacerbate lock delays to the detriment of the National economy. It is now time to make this National investment.

Sincerely,

Gary D. Marshall  
Chief Executive Officer

GDM:pp

cc. Denny Lundberg  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Clock Tower Building  
P.O. Box 2004  
Rock Island, IL 61204

**Responses to comments from Missouri Corn Growers Association.**

The full evaluation of ecosystem and navigation improvement measures will be accomplished as part of the feasibility study. Tentative plans will be completed by October 2003 and shared with the stakeholders and public. A final recommendation will then be determined and documented in the final feasibility report scheduled for completion in 2004.